



Planning For Growth

The retention and expansion of the local business community is vital to the continued health of the Liberty Road communities. Liberty Road is an aging commercial strip confronted with changing market dynamics which call for an augmented capacity for the promotion and management of growth. Baltimore County's planning, zoning and development regulations and policies as well as the resources of the Economic Development Commission and LCDC are tools which can effectively channel and control growth in both the commercial and residential communities.



Zoning

Zoning should be used as a tool to both attract desirable businesses to the Road and to curtail the proliferation and concentration of uses which inhibit the necessary mix of a healthy economy. In the years ahead we would like to see a reduction in the number of new automotive related and fast food projects and a corresponding increase in more compatible and less intensive projects such as office parks and more diversified retail and

service ventures. Current zoning rules, regulations and procedures offer us only limited opportunities to effectively promote this scenario. To truly be responsive to our communities' needs we require new and better zoning tools.

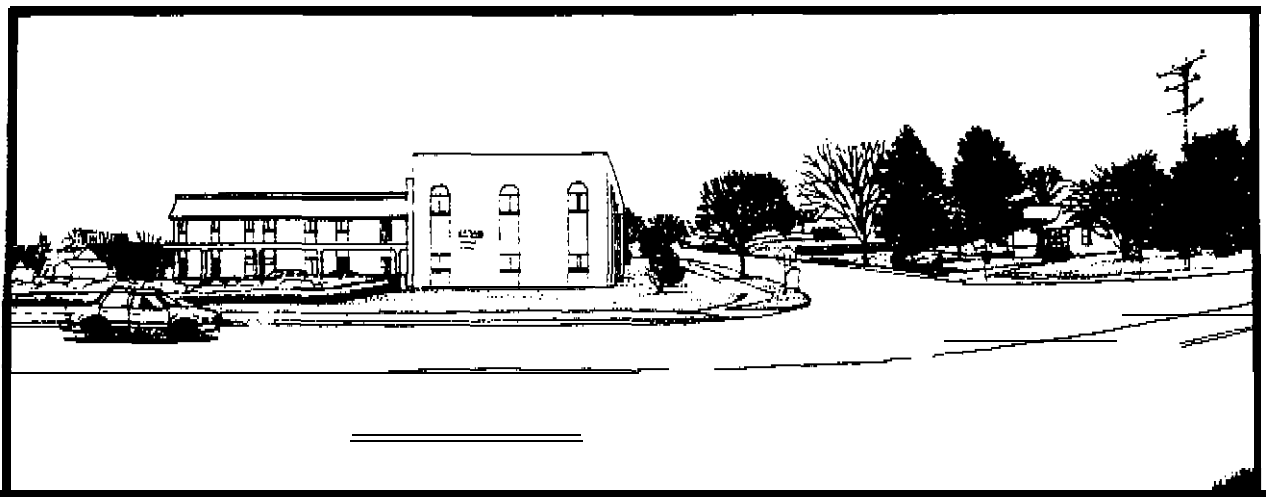
The control of uses, as well as the maintenance of the commercial sector would most effectively be accomplished in a timely manner through the creation of a Liberty Road Zoning Overlay District which would be superimposed over existing zoning classifications. The overlay district would better control uses throughout the corridor and within individual commercial areas or nodes by either encouraging or discouraging specific uses. New automotive uses might be compatible and encouraged in one area but not in another. Additionally, the overlay district would require common development standards for property maintenance, design, signage, landscaping and lighting. This district should be created in advance of the Zoning Map Process by joint action of the County and the community.

Uses allowed in zoning classifications, particularly B (Business), M (Manufacturing) and O (Office) should be examined and improved. The effective use of B zones as a means to control use has eroded over the years. Liberty Road's commercial areas are predominantly BL (Business Local), BM (Business Major) and BR (Business Roadside) and their respective permitted uses should be better distinguished. Currently, any potential developer who believes that "the car is king" has substantial zoning latitude to replace a

furniture store with an automotive shop as either a Matter of Right or by Special Exception.

Zoning regulations for M and O zone developments along Liberty Road should be reviewed and improved as a means to attract compatible projects. Land use issues such as minimum open space requirements and allowable uses should be examined and made more flexible, .

Zoning should also be used to protect the viability of the residential communities and the competitive position of the Revitalization Area. Proposed commercial developments in proximity to Liberty Road with the intent and/or potential to detract from either the existing residential or commercial areas should be discouraged.



New commercial uses within PUDs (Planned Unit Developments) should be controlled in size and use so as to not reduce Liberty Road patronage. This potential is addressed in Legg Mason's 1989

Economic Forecasts, "County policy should consider whether proposed retail developments and sites . . . will serve unmet needs from new residents or if they will displace retail sales from existing centers and community shopping areas." Similarly, new commercial projects along roads intersecting or running parallel to Liberty Road (Windsor Mill, Milford Mill, Rolling, Old Court, McDonogh and Deer Park) should be denied in order to protect against infringement into residential areas, as well as to preserve the existing market.

Recommendations

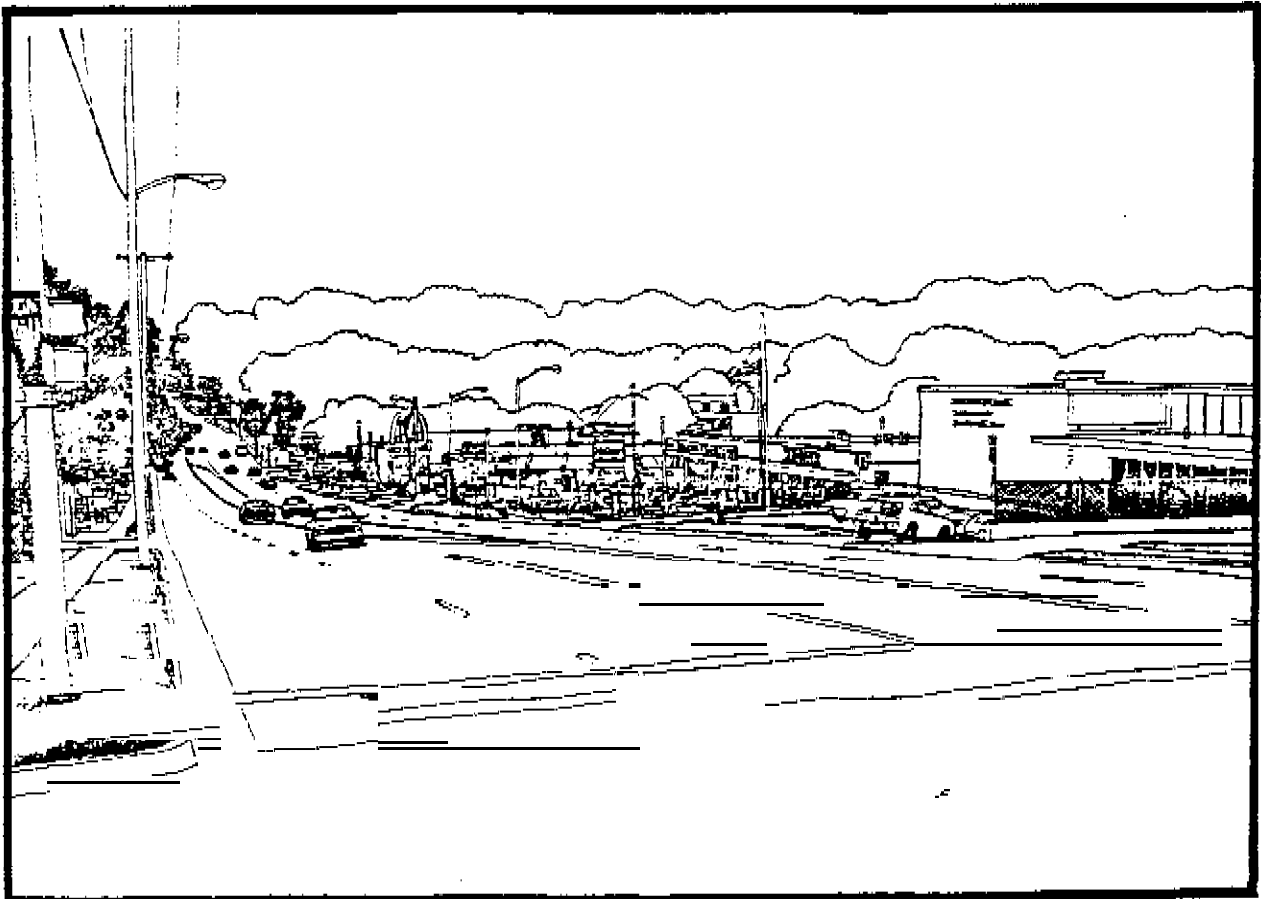
- #1 The creation of a Liberty Road zoning overlay district designed to control uses and establish standards for maintenance, design, signage, landscaping and lighting.**
- #2 Revise residential PUD (Planned Unit Developments) regulations to remove commercial zoning as a matter of right and to control size and use.**
- #3 County revision of permitted uses in B zones to better control uses.**
- #4 Improvements to M and O zones as a means to promote compatible developments along Liberty Road.**
- #5 Prohibit new commercial zoning on the cross streets intersecting Liberty Road, including any future roads, (Milford Mill, Rolling, Old Court, McDonogh, and Deer Park Roads) within the boundaries of the plan.**
- #6 Control and restrict commercial zoning and uses along major parallel roads, (Windsor Mill Road).**

#7 Cluster commercial zoning on Liberty Road and provide buffering to protect residential areas.



Development Controls and Incentives

As an eight mile linear highway Liberty Road is one large Revitalization Area with related but distinct commercial parts; County Line and Woodmoor, Milford Mill, Old Court, Randallstown and Deer Park. Its overall continued revitalization will require additional catalytic actions, some of which will be applicable corridor wide and others which should be targeted at particular areas.



The County's Master Plan 1989-2000 accurately describes the commercial area inside the Beltway as the area in most need; "Inside the Beltway there are neglected buildings and vacancies. This is one of the few areas where "urban" problems have begun to impact the County." This area includes the commercial properties between the City Line and Kelox Road and the Woodmoor and Liberty Crest Shopping Center areas. quality commercial reinvestments are almost non-existent and properties continue to decline despite the maintenance of middle class residential neighborhoods and the injection of public physical improvements.

These "urban problems" require solutions based upon much greater public sector involvement in the area's future. The County and the community should design and implement a suburban model for this target area consisting of a comprehensive set of actions and resources specifically designed to contain and reverse the existing trend of disinvestment and deterioration. This suburban model should be more akin to redevelopment than revitalization. Redevelopment should be sought and encouraged through land assemblage, business and marketing plans and the possible acquisition and resale of properties. Other activities should include coordinated zoning, building and health code enforcement, the provision of incentives, including technical assistance, preferred financing, increased security and additional public improvements.

The technical assistance referred to above will require a modification of existing Revitalization programs to include consulting on business plans, financing, loan packaging, design

assistance along with support and assistance on licensing and permit applications. Preferred financing would include, revolving loans and other public funds such as State Action Loans for Targeted Areas (SALT).

Revitalization activities corridor wide should be promoted through a series of development controls and incentives designed to foster business retention, expansion, improvement and attraction. Existing County zoning and building regulations along with the proposed new zoning overlay districts incorporating design and maintenance standards should be coupled with County revitalization incentives designed to facilitate improvements.

Design and signage issues could be addressed through the assistance of a publicly retained architectural or design firm. Actual improvements could be financed through a revolving loan fund. Existing, as well as new businesses, should be provided with technical assistance on site selection, financing and governmental approvals.

Economic and market data and information should be regularly maintained and distributed as a means to attract new businesses. Liberty Road's image to both the consumer and investor should be strengthened through an aggressive and professionally assisted marketing and promotional campaign.

Public improvements including roadways, facilities and amenities should be provided as a means to support and encourage private

projects. All new private commercial developments should be examined through the County Review Group (CRG) process for adequate security measures.

Recommendations

- #1 Design and implement a Suburban Model program for the commercial areas inside of the Beltway (City line to Kelox Road, Woodmoor and Liberty Crest). The model should be devised using community talents and promote the redevelopment of the area through site specific development plans, land assemblage, marketing, code enforcement, development incentives and other means.**
- #2 The maintenance of market analysis and economic data including demographics, property ownership, zoning, usage, etc. for the entire Road.**
- #3 Technical assistance, including site selection, business plans, financing, loan packaging, design and permits to facilitate business retention, expansion and attraction.**
- #4 Decentralize the delivery of services, such as the issuance of permits and licenses, for area businesses as well as residential, making them available through the Liberty Family Resource Center.**
- #5 The availability of preferred financing through public programs including a loan program with attractive rates and terms for construction, physical improvements, design and security.**

- #6 The consideration **of tax deferments for improvement projects** within the Revitalization Area.
- #7 **The provision of publicly supported design assistance by contract(s) with architectural or design firms as a means to improve and maintain the appearance of commercial properties.**
- #8 **Public improvements, including roads, amenities, landscaping, traffic signals, signage, etc. designed to compliment or catalyze private projects and improvements.**
- #9 **Require the police department's review and involment in the CRG process to insure adequate security for commercial and business projects.**
- #10 **Review and augnent the County's legal capacity to enforce the improvement, maintenance or razing of vacant properties.**
- #11 **An ongoing cooperative effort between the County and revitalization areas for the services of a professional public relations or marketing firm**
- #12 **The development of promotional events and activities through LCDC, public agencies and individual shopping centers and businesses.**
- #13 **The use of a logo and promotional material for the corridor, in general, and individual commercial nodes.**